



## Third Quarterly Report 2019 (July - September)

### I. Introduction and highlights

One of the main accomplishments during this quarter is the public launch of the Humanitarian Organisation Database (HOD).

The team also continues working with the University of Geneva within its “Digital Humanities” project to develop the online platform for the Humanitarian Encyclopedia.

A knowledge management strategy was crafted and shared with the Advisory Board for their feedback. It is expected to be validated in early 2020 and implemented when the online platform of the Humanitarian Encyclopedia is publicly available.

### II. Research

#### Humanitarian Organisation Database

Mapping organizations involved in humanitarian activities is a challenging task. The very humanitarian label is both contested - some organizations active in crisis areas refuse to use it - but is also a source of legitimacy for other organizations. In this dataset composed of 2,505 organizations, an organisation is considered as a humanitarian actor if it:

- works in an emergency/ chronic emergency context. Such contexts include armed conflict settings, natural disasters and situations of multifaceted vulnerabilities.
- defines at least 30% part of its activities using the following key words: “humanitarian”, “emergency,” “relief”, “disaster”, “crisis”.

These two criteria are cumulative: to be included an organization needs to meet both of them. The database only includes organizations which were still active in 2017-2018.

This dataset is exclusively based on existing online resources. Data on each organization was collected through an analysis of each organization’s Websites; annual reports and, when relevant, other publications and Social media pages (Facebook, LinkedIn). The way in which each organization describes itself, therefore, is the key reference for the entries of HOD.

The data provided to users includes date of creation, organisational type and subtype, location of headquarters, locations of field operations, types of activities, faiths, and specific service target groups. The definition of each variable follows scientific standards and allows for cross-country and cross-sector comparison.

The [Humanitarian Organisations Database](#) allows organisations to update their profile online and for not-yet-listed organisations to register following an established procedure. This database should be taken as a first effort to map the diversity of the humanitarian field that we hope to expand on with the help of our partners. The HOD will thus contribute to a better understanding of the humanitarian ‘ecosystem’ at various levels.

### **Analysis of prioritized humanitarian concepts**

Following the completion of the Corpus consisting of around 71 million words – big data according to linguists – the linguistic analysis is being carried out on all priority concepts for 2019 using a tool specifically conceived to explore big corpora of texts (SketchEngine). The elements observed through the linguistic analysis include existing concept definitions, the frequency of use, the distribution and the use of the term in context, associated concepts and possible nuances of meaning. It also offers some insights into observable differences in ways organisations use the same concept.

This first analysis is discussed with the academic experts who are committed to author concept explanations. Depending on the questions and wishes of the author(s) a more in-depth analysis is then conducted, allowing authors to gather the information needed to draft the concept entry.

Some Scientific Committee members and further experts have committed to producing the first set of concept explanations: ‘accountability’, ‘capacity’ and ‘capacity building’, ‘climate change’, ‘development’, ‘dignity’, ‘evidence’, ‘forced displacement’, ‘independence’, ‘localisation’, ‘neutrality’ and ‘impartiality’, ‘NGO’, ‘resilience’, and ‘vulnerability’.

### **III. Development of online platform**

Meetings took place with the University of Geneva (UNIGE) for the online platform of the Humanitarian Encyclopedia to take shape.



The UNIGE IT project team will develop the “core” of the platform allowing to capture a variety of research data related to concept analysis and the HOD. The Proof-of-Concept for

the platform shall be available by the end of 2019 allowing to present the first concept entries in a simple format. In a second step the more sophisticated user interface will be created during the first semester of 2020.

## **IV. Governance**

### **Advisory Board**

ACAPS<sup>1</sup>, InterAction<sup>2</sup>, and WFP<sup>3</sup> joined the Advisory Board of the Humanitarian Encyclopedia project. Each organisation of the Advisory Board brings to the Advisory Board their expertise to guide the overall development of the Humanitarian Encyclopedia. They also ensure that it is properly grounded in the reality of concrete institutional and operational challenges. The [Advisory Board](#) comprises 21 organisations operating in different levels and from all regions.

### **Direction of the project**

Prof Doris Schopper, who initiated and guided the development of the Humanitarian Encyclopedia project, retired from her function as the Director of CERAH at the end of September. She will remain active as member of the Scientific Committee and as researcher. Her successor, Prof Karl Blanchet, will assume the direction of the project from October onwards.

### **Funding**

The government of Germany has recently joined those of Switzerland and Luxemburg in supporting the project. In addition, we were successful in securing funding from a Swiss foundation. This testifies to the fact that these donors are convinced by the added value of the project for the humanitarian sector.

## **V. Acknowledgement**

Mr Gyan Kothari returned to CERAH this summer as research assistant. His contribution to the HOD research project was highly appreciated. The team wishes Mr Kothari all the best for his master degree studies starting this autumn.

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<sup>1</sup> Assessment Capacities Project

<sup>2</sup> American Council for Voluntary International Action

<sup>3</sup> United Nations World Food Programme